

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please insert the following paragraph on page 1 after line 15:

This application is the U.S. National Stage of International Application No. PCT/AU2003/000852 filed July 2, 2003, which claims priority based on Australian Patent Application No. 2002/950186 filed July 5, 2002.

Please insert the following paragraph after page 8, line 8:

**ABSTRACT**

A descent apparatus (13) for loads and/or persons. The apparatus includes a cable or rope (17) adapted to be fixed at an elevated location with the remainder of the cable or rope being wound around a pulley (12) rotatably mounted within a housing (11) via an axle shaft (13). The housing (11) is adapted to be attached to the load and/or person and the relative rotation between the pulley (12) and the axle shaft (13) is controlled by a closed circuit gear pump (14) the gears (25, 26) of which form transmission means between the pulley (12) and the axle shaft (13). The closed gear pump forms part of an hydraulic circuit which contains a speed control mechanism (33) provided by an orifice (30) in the hydraulic circuit which forms a constriction to control the speed of the pump and thus the speed of rotation of the pulley about the axle shaft and as a consequence the speed of the descent of the descent apparatus (10) as the cable or rope unwinds from the pulley. The speed control mechanism can also include a valve member (34) co-operating with a mating seat (35) in an end of the orifice, whilst the position of the valve member (34) is adjustable relative to its seat by a grub screw (36) to adjust the rate of flow of hydraulic fluid through the closed circuit gear pump and as a consequence the speed of descent of the descent apparatus.